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(WASHINGTON, DC) -- Today, Congressman Russ Carnahan (MO-3) voted to pass H.R. 1700, the COPS Reauthorization Act. This legislation is designed to help local law enforcement agencies hire an additional 50,000 police officers by authorizing a total of \$1.15 billion over the next six years

Created under the Clinton Administration in 1994, the COPS hiring grants program was a highly successful and popular program. From 1995 to 2005, the program assisted local law enforcement agencies to hire 117,000 additional police officers.

"In my home state of Missouri, we received \$169,306,054 in COPS hiring grants funding over ten years," Carnahan said. "This money enabled our state to hire an additional 2238 officers to keep our streets safe. With the passage of H.R. 1700, it is estimated that Missouri will be able to hire an additional 957 officers."

Under the COPS hiring grants program, crime rates dropped significantly. A nonpartisan GAO study concluded, "COPS-funded increases in sworn officers per capita were associated with declines in rates of total index crimes, violent crimes and property crime." According to the study, between 1998 and 2000, the hiring grants were responsible for reducing crimes by about 200,000 to 225,000 crimes, of which, one third were violent.

Over the past few years, President Bush and the Republican-led Congress eventually ended the funding for COPS hiring grants from over \$1 billion per year in the late 1990s to \$198 million in 2003 and \$10 million in 2005. In 2006, the Republican-led Congress eliminated the COPS hiring grants program completely.

However, since the elimination of the COPS program by the President and the past Republican Congress, violent crime has spiked across the nation. According to a 2007 report conducted by the Police Executive Research Forum, violent crimes rose by double digit percentages over the

last two years. Among the cities surveyed, since 2005, 71 percent had an increase in homicides, 80 percent saw robberies rise and 67 percent reported an increase in aggravated assaults with guns.

The Fraternal Order of Police has stated, "Just as the decrease in crime was directly related to an increased focus on hiring law enforcement officers at the state and local level, the more recent increase in certain crimes can be directly related to the loss of federal funds supporting state and local law enforcement."

"The COPS program has been an overwhelming success in reducing violent crime in our nation's cities. I am proud to reverse the Republican cuts to this vital program and provide the funding our law enforcement officials need and our citizens deserve," Carnahan said.

The bill is supported by the Fraternal Order of Police, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the National Association of Police Organizations, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the National League of Cities and the National Sheriffs Association.